

# The American RECORD GUIDE

formerly The American Music Lover



Edited by

PETER HUGH REED

October, 1945 VOL. XII, No. 2

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## THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

115 REED AVENUE

PELHAM 65, N. Y.

# The American RECORD GUIDE

October, 1945 . VOL. XII, No. 2

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## Editorial Notes

In the September issue of *The Gramophone*, Compton Mackenzie made some relevant editorial observations on the lack of discrimination among present-day music listeners. There is, in his estimation, "a too genial toleration of the third-rate and a really deplorable enthusiasm for the second-rate", that is "becoming a characteristic of public listening". This applies both to concert audiences as well as radio listeners. "Private listening," Mr. Mackenzie feels, "still remains critical and gramophiles are mercifully free from the slight touch of hysteria which seems to affect the ears of concert audiences," and, also, radio listeners.

The condition of which the discerning editor of *The Gramophone* speaks is not confined to the British Isles, but exists in this country also. Commercialism dominates in the radio field, and is the mainspring of the record business. In the concert hall, we are perhaps better off as regards quality of our performances—particularly where orchestral fare is concerned—than the British. Yet, there is strong evidence that here, too, many programs are prepared with an eye to mass approval, inviting that "too genial toleration" and that "deplorable enthusiasm" to flourish. This condition is far worse in radio. The orchestral concerts on the airways this

past summer were predominantly mediocre. And some of the best artists on the air, many of whom were introduced to listeners as highly gifted performers of good music, are now demonstrating their musical talents in second- and third-rate music. These singers, trained for operatic and concert work, seldom emerge as even engaging performers in the popular genre, and it might be observed that not infrequently the transition from the serious to the popular and vice versa soon finds the artist not giving his or her best in either field.

Mr. Mackenzie goes on to say discerningly: "Once upon a time, we looked to the gramophone to encourage enthusiasm for good music. The way things are going now we shall presently have to look to the gramophone to curb public passion for musical mediocrity." This can be taken two ways, although primarily Mr. Mackenzie intends it to imply that the gramophone can supply the best. As he further says: "The mere fact of a piano soloist's being able to play through a famous concerto without falling off his stool is not enough, and I do hope that some of the members of the audiences at the Albert Hall [in London] went home and repeated to themselves on the gramophone one or two of the concerto performances I have

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Published by THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE,  
General Offices: 115 Reed Ave., Pelham, N. Y.

\* Peter Hugh Reed, Editor; Philip Miller (in service), Harold C. Schonberg (in service), Associate Editor; Paul Girard, Circulation Manager; Julius J. Spector, Art Editor.

\* Advertising Manager, in Service—address communications to the Editor.

\* Published monthly, *The American Record Guide* sells at twenty-five cents a copy in the U.S.A. Yearly subscription \$2.50, in Canada and all foreign countries.

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Reentered as second class matter November 7, 1944, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

listened to but abstain from naming. If they have, I am sure they must have wondered in the tranquility of their own rooms what had recently made them go berserk at the Albert Hall." How often we have turned off a performance of a work on the radio and resorted to a worthy playing of it on the phonograph. Many of our readers have written to us through the years how they have similarly had to shun poor public performances, or redeem them at home with first-rate phonographic material. But although the phonograph can supply the best, not infrequently it perpetuates the mediocre, and sometimes it features its best artists in purely meretricious fare.

Two discriminating music listeners and one musician—all close friends of ours—read with interest Mr. Mackenzie's recent editorial. "How can the phonograph be relied upon 'to curb public passion for mediocrity', if people are unwilling or unable to comprehend values?" one asked. "Second-rate artists can be and are glorified by clever publicity, and the greater percentage of music lovers rank them as first-rate. I daresay when you adversely criticize a public idol, a lot of readers disbelieve in the validity of your remarks. They seek guidance but discount its worth." Another remarked on the fact that "so many of our fine artists have recently chosen to record popular rather than good music".

The first speaker was quite right in assuming that a lot of people question the validity of some criticism. The assumption that no celebrity can do wrong is widespread. The public idol occupies a pedestal in the minds of far too many. However, it is a grave mistake to place the artist ahead of the art.

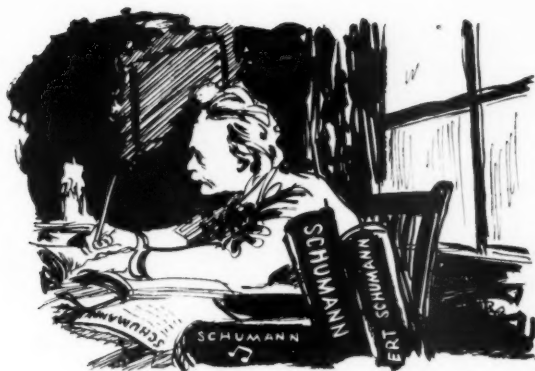
The remark of the second listener brings us to another question. Having been denied recording privileges for a period of two years, the artists are pandering to public taste, either advisedly or inadvisedly, depending on the point of view one takes. Unquestionably the bulk of the record-buying public want popular fare, and a good percentage of them want to hear the kind of music they like played and sung by the greatest artists as well as the popular ones: a big name appeals tremendously. People feel that that person endorses their own likes and it is by this means, deplored by the critical and musical snobs, that many listeners have come

to know a great performer's art, when they might otherwise never have done so. Many people who feel that good music is "high hat" stuff achieve an appreciation of it through circuitous routes. Sometimes, they get acquainted with the art of a great performer through one of his renditions of a popular composition; then, having learned to appreciate the art of the performer, they investigate his performances of more substantial fare. How much pioneer musical appreciation was done by such famous recording artists of the past as Caruso, McCormack, Alma Gluck, and the inimitable Geraldine Farrar, we can never know. Their popular contributions were stepping-stones with many to an appreciation of their greater recordings. Although it is to be deplored that people set up artistic before musical values, and expect and demand that great artists perform mediocre music, it should be noted that musical values can only be affirmed by the artist and in order to advance his art widely it is necessary that he walk in the street, so to speak, with the crowd before he can expect the crowd to climb up to his level.

If one feels inclined to criticize some of the musical fare which the record companies are putting out today, it would be well for one to consider the position in which the companies themselves were placed by the recording ban. During that lamentable period in the history of the phonograph, the companies had a hard time finding consistently good material to release. There was plenty of evidence that they were scraping the bottom of the barrel rather desperately. But, it should be observed, during this period good music was given wider exploitation than popular music. A clever device was the re-issue of many of the true masterpieces of phonographic art. This is a procedure we should like to see continued. There are record sets of ten or more years ago which be advantageously reissued and re-exploited each month along with the new releases—year in and year out. It is a grave mistake to think that modern reproduction nullifies the worth of recordings made a decade or more ago.

It should be taken into consideration by the critics of the record companies that they have not as yet had a fair chance to catch up on normal production. Commitments with artists made before the record ban take

(Continued on page 56)



# ROBERT SCHUMANN

## EDVARD GRIEG

*The following article by Edvard Grieg appeared in The Century Magazine in January 1894. It seems to us that Grieg's appreciation of Schumann is by no means dated, nor are the arguments he advances in the latter's behalf any less valid with the passing of time. Since there are many among us who still share the Wagnerian attitude toward Schumann and his art, Grieg's reference to Wagner and his expression of distaste for Schumann does not appear even today as raking up outmoded prejudices. We share the views of the English writer, Neville d'Esterre (whose name is familiar to our readers): "Schumann had a greater range than Chopin," he has said, "but a lesser intensity. His music is more decorative but less brilliant. Seldom does Schumann startle us, but great is his power to soothe and console. The thoughts that arose in Schumann took shape in a lyric beauty seldom surpassed. An evening of Schumann's music is like a day in the famous Italian picture galleries. There is in his music the soft, warm tone-color of the old masters, with here and there a Titian touch of something stronger and more emphatic. It possesses a quality not found in the same degree in the work of any composer, the quality of refinement."—Ed.*

### Part I

Some years ago, a young lady was sitting at the piano, singing, on board a steamer on the coast of Norway. When she paused, a stranger stepped up to her, introducing himself as a lover of music. They fell into conversation, and had not talked long when the stranger exclaimed: "You love Schumann? Then we are friends!" and reached her his hand.

This is characteristic as illustrating the intimate quality in Schumann's art. To meet in quiet comprehension of the master during a mysterious tete-a-tete at a piano—that is genuinely Schumanesque. Schumann has never ostentatiously summoned any body of adherents. He has been a comet without a tail, but for all that, one of the most remarkable comets in the firmament of art. His worshippers have always been "the single ones". There is something in them of

the character of the sensitive mimosa; and they are unhappily so apt to hide themselves and their admiration under the leaves of the "Blue Flower" of romanticism, that it would seem a hopeless undertaking even to gather them (as, for instance, the Wagnerians) into a close phalanx. Schumann has made his way without any other propaganda than that which lies in his works; and his progress has therefore been slow, and for this reason the more secure. Without attempting by artificial means to anticipate the future, he lived and labored in accordance with his own principle: "Become only an ever greater artist, and all other things will come to you of their own accord."

#### A Widely Loved Composer

That this principle was a sound one has been confirmed by the present generation, by whom Schumann's name is known and loved even to the remotest regions of the civilized world. It is not to be denied, however, that the best years of his artistic activity were lost without any comprehension of his significance, and when recognition at last began to come, Schumann's strength was broken. Of this melancholy fact I received a vivid impression when, in the year of 1883, I called upon his famous wife, Clara Schumann, in Frankfort on the Main. I fancied she would be pleased to hear of her husband's popularity in so distant a region as my native country, Norway; but in this I was mistaken. Her countenance darkened as she answered dismally, "Yes, *now*."

The influence which Schumann's art has exercised and is exercising in modern music cannot be overestimated. In conjunction with Chopin and Liszt, he dominates at this time the whole literature of the piano, while the piano compositions of his great contemporary Mendelssohn, which were exalted at Schumann's expense, would seem to be vanishing from the concert program. In conjunction with his predecessor Franz Schubert, and in a higher degree than any contemporary,—not even Robert Franz excepted,—he pervades the literature of the musical "romance"; while even here Mendelssohn is relegated *ad acta*. What a strange retribution of fate! It is the old story of Nemesis, Mendelssohn received, as it were, more than his due of admiration in advance; Schumann, less than his due. Posterity had to

balance their accounts. But it has, according to my opinion, in its demand for justice identified itself so completely with Schumann and his cause that Mendelssohn has been unfairly treated or directly wronged. This is true, however, only as regards the above mentioned genres, the piano and the musical romance. In orchestral compositions Mendelssohn still maintains his position, while Schumann has taken a place at his side as his equal. I say his equal, for surely no significance can be attached to the circumstance that a certain part of the younger generation (Wagnerians chiefly) have fallen into the habit of treating Schumann, as an orchestral composer, *de haut en bas*. These enthusiasts, being equipped with an excess of self-esteem, and holding it to be their duty to level everything which, according to their opinion, interferes with the free view of the Bayreuth master, venture to shrug their shoulders at Schumann's instrumentation, to deny his symphonic sense, to attack the structure of his periods and his plastic faculty. They do not even hesitate to characterize his entire orchestral composition as a failure; and in order to justify this indictment, they propound the frank declaration that his orchestral works are only instrumental piano-music. The fact that Schumann did not occupy himself with Mendelssohn's formally piquant effects, and was not an orchestral virtuoso in the style of Wagner, is turned upside down in the effort totally to deny him both the plastic sense and the faculty of instrumentation. At the same time they refrain from recognizing all the ideal advantages that primarily make Schuman the world-conquering force he has now virtually become.

#### Propaganda of Conceit

All this appears too ridiculous, too stupid, to be in need of refutation. Nevertheless, this propaganda of pure conceit has of late become so prevalent that it has gained a certain authority, and has even found a most sensational expression in the press. It would therefore seem to be the appropriate time for investigating it a little closely. It is perfectly well known where the commotion had its origin. It will be remembered that in the year 1879 an article appeared in the *Bayreuther Blaetter* entitled *Concerning Schumann's Music*, signed Joseph Rubinstein, but (this is an open secret) unquestionably in-

spired, by no less a man than Richard Wagner. The style, the tone, as well as the inconsiderate audacity with which the writer hurled forth his taunts, the public recognized as truly Wagnerian, and promptly designated the Bayreuth master as the one who must bear the responsibility of its authorship, in spite of the fact that he had attempted to disguise himself by simpler constructions than those which we recognize in his public writings. In this incredible production Schumann's art is by all possible and impossible means reduced *ad absurdum*. Not a shred of honor is left to it. The very greatest qualities of the master—his glowing fancy and his lofty lyrical flights—are dragged down into the dirt, and described as the most monstrous conventionality. His orchestral music, his piano compositions, his songs—all are treated with the same contempt. One does not know which ought to be the greater object of astonishment, the man who did put his name to this pamphlet, or the man who did not. The former is said to have been one of Wagner's piano lackeys, who was contemptible enough to allow himself to be used as a screen.

#### Wagner vs. Schumann

Upon Wagner's relation to Schumann this article throws so interesting a light that it cannot well be overlooked. As a matter of course, Wagner as a man is here left out of consideration. And from out of the depth of my admiration for Wagner the *artist*, I can only affirm that he was as one-sided as he was great. As regards Schumann, the very opposite is true. He was anything but one-sided. He is, in most respects, a remarkable counterpart to Liszt. The rare faculty of both these masters of recognizing anything great and new that was stirring about them forms a contrast, as beneficent as it is evident, to the unintelligent and illiberal view of the greatest contemporary talents which is so prominent a trait of Wagner, and (in his attitude toward Schuman) also of Mendelssohn. Compare only the harsh judgments of Wagner on Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms—to name only the most important—with Schumann's warm and sympathetic criticism of the great men of his day, as it is found on nearly every page of his collected writings; and it will be neces-

sary to take exception to the poet's declaration, "*Alles grosse ist einseitig*."

Schumann has indeed raised a most beautiful monument to himself in his unprejudiced judgments of all that was considerable among his surroundings. I need only refer to his introduction into the musical world of such names as Berlioz, Chopin, Brahms, Gade, etc. We find him in his youth so busily occupied in clearing the way for others that we are left to wonder how, at the same time, he found it possible to develop his own deep soul as he must have done in the first great creative period of his life, which was chiefly devoted to piano-music. What a new and original spirit! What wealth, what depth, what poetry, in these compositions! The *Fantasia in C major*, with its daring flight, and its hidden undertone for him who listens secretly (*fuer den heimlich lauscht*), as the motto declares; his *F sharp minor Sonata*, with its romantic enthusiasm and its burlesque abandon; *Kreisleriana*, *Carnival*, *Davidsbuendlertaenze*, *Novelettes*,—only to name a few of his principal works,—what a world of beauty, what intensity of emotional life, are hidden in these! And what bewitching harmony—out of the very soul of the piano—for him who is able to interpret, for him who can and will hear! But the above mentioned Bayreuth hireling has not taunts enough for Schumann's piano-music, which he finds to be written in a certain virtuoso style that is, after all, absolutely false and external. "The difficult passages in Schumann," he says, "are effective only when, as is mostly the case, they are brought out obscurely and blurred."

#### Unjust Criticism

A poor witticism! And then this talk about virtuoso style, falseness, and objectiveness in Schumann's piano-phrasing! Can anything more unjust be imagined? For one ought rather to emphasize his moderation in his use of virtuoso methods, as compared, for instance, with Liszt or Chopin. And to accuse him of unadaptability for the piano, amounts of course to a denial of familiarity with the piano.

It is a fact, however, well known to every genuine piano-player that Schumann could not have written a single one of his many piano compositions without the most intimate familiarity with the subtlest secrets of

that instrument. Nor need anyone be told that he was a most admirable player. One of the best friends of Schumann's youth, Ernst Ferdinand Wenzel, teacher at the Leipzig Conservatory, with whom I often talked about the master, used to recall with sad pleasure the many evenings, in the olden time, when he would sit at twilight in the corner of the sofa in Schumann's den, and listen to his glorious playing.

The attempt to turn the master's greatest and most obvious merits into defects is such sharp practice that one would be justified in attributing to its author an acquaintance with that "jurisprudence" which he flings into Schumann's face, reproaching him with having devoted too much time to it at the expense of his music. However much energy and infernal ingenuity in the invention of the charges one may be disposed to concede to the writer, here—in the question of the technique of the piano—he has allowed his zeal to run away with him to such an extent that he has forgotten to cover himself. In wishing to hit Schumann, he hits himself. He openly displays how destitute he himself is of any idea of the technique of the piano. Liszt, whose judgments on everything relating to the piano Wagner on other occasions respected, expressed, as is well known, a very different opinion of Schumann's piano compositions, of which he always spoke with the warmest admiration, and in the appreciation of which he was an enthusiastic and powerful pioneer. Liszt advocated Schumann's claims at a time when no one else ventured to do it. Wagner, on the contrary, tried to make an end of him long after his death, when his reputation was as firmly established as that of Wagner himself. If this matter concerned Wagner only as an individual, I should not undertake to discuss it in an article on Schumann. But, it concerns, in my opinion, in an equal degree Wagner the artist. It is possible that Wagner the individual *would* not recognize Schumann's greatness; but it is absolutely certain that Wagner the artist *could* not recognize it. However, his effort to dethrone Schumann was happily a total failure, for the simple reason that it was not feasible. Schumann stands where he stood, impregnable—as does Wagner.

#### Chamber Music

So much for Schumann the piano-composer. When I turn to his chamber music, I find

here, too, some of his most beautiful inspirations. It has been asserted that he is greatest in the smaller forms. But the *Quintet in E flat*, the *Piano Quartet*, the *Trio in D minor*, both the sonatas for the violin, and the quartets for stringed instruments in *A major* and *A minor*, afford sufficient evidence that where a larger mold was required he had also a wealth of beauty at his command. It is not to be denied that in his tone-blending of piano and stringed instruments he never attained the height which Mendelssohn and Schubert reached. It has always been affirmed that he neglects absolute harmony, that his stringed instruments, carrying the melody, do not always enter in the most appropriate places, etc. But such things are trifles which an intelligent conception and careful study will easily remedy. The principal thing—viz., the splendid impulse and illusion—is rarely wanting. Minor impracticabilities, which hundreds of smaller spirits easily avoid, are, strange to say, to be met with in Schumann. In the piano quartet, for example, he has had the delightful idea of uniting the andante and the finale thematically. But the retuning of the cello from the deep B flat to C, which is here absolutely required, excludes the immediate transition to the last movement, whereby the exquisite effect which has been obviously intended is lost.

#### The String Quartets

The three quartets for stringed instruments (Opus 41) are conceived with as much originality as love. Schumann, to be sure, often ignores the traditional notion that the character of the quartet for stringed instruments is only polyphonic. Hence the complaint of want of style in his quartets, as well as the charge that the instruments do not attain their full musical value. But who, having heard, for instance, a distinguished performance of the *A major* will forget the flood of harmony which Schumann can entice from stringed instruments when they are in the hands of great artists? It is related by reliable contemporaries that these quartets did not find favor in Mendelssohn's eyes. It was during the intercourse of both masters in Leipzig that Schumann one day confided to Mendelssohn that he had suddenly been seized with a desire to write quartets for stringed instruments, but that he had just

taken steps to carry out a long-cherished plan to visit Italy, and was therefore in a dilemma.

"Remain here and write the quartets," was Mendelssohn's counsel, which Schumann accepted. He remained in Leipzig, and concentrated the whole strength of his soul upon the completion of the task which he had set himself. When Mendelssohn, however, received the quartets, he is reported to have said: "I rather wish now that Schumann had gone to Italy."

We ought not to wonder at this. Mendelssohn never, or at least very rarely, departed in his works for stringed instruments from the severest principle of polyphony, as practiced by Haydn, Mozart, and by Beethoven in his earlier works. Schumann had his roots rather in the later works of Beethoven, where—as is also the case with Schubert—he is not afraid of applying homophony, or even sym-

phonic orchestral style, in quartets for stringed instruments. Upon this fact, in part, rests the opinion that Mendelssohn and Schumann, though they may be named as contemporaries, are yet far apart, the former closing a great artistic period, the classic, and the latter preparing and introducing a no less great one, the romantic. Both masters met, as it were, upon the same threshold. But they certainly did not pass each other coldly by. On the contrary, they paused to exchange many a winged word. It is not to be denied, however, that it would have been better for Schumann if he had listened less to Mendelssohn's maxims and set more store by his own. His admiration for Mendelssohn is beautiful, but there is in this beauty a certain weakness, and this is perhaps closely connected with his later tragic fate.

(To be continued)

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## BOOK REVIEW

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FLORESTAN: THE LIFE AND WORK OF ROBERT SCHUMANN, by Robert Haven Schauffler. 374 pp. New York: Henry Holt & Co., \$3.75.

▲ This book is a worthy companion to Mr. Schauffler's penetrating studies of Beethoven and Brahms, and is one of the best musical biographies that have appeared in a long time. Those who have read Mr. Schauffler's earlier books are familiar with his lively style and eminent readability.

The biographical section occupies about half the book, with a chapter on Schumann as critic; while the discussion of the music (culminating in a chapter entitled "What makes Schumann's music Schumannian?") takes up the remainder. There are upwards of 250 musical examples, three copious indices, a detailed list of compositions, a bibliography and a record list. The last two are not overly exhaustive.

Mr. Schauffler goes to original sources for much of his biographical material, and picks out salient points in the letters and diaries in

order to build up his portraits of both Robert and Clara. Schauffler shows the latter to be a somewhat less fine musician than is generally supposed, and brings forth evidence to prove that she was not always capable of appreciating Robert's best music. Although she was a superb executive artist, her taste was sometimes deplorable. Despite the fanciful title and chapter-headings, the biography is factual and critical, and not fictionalized. Schauffler presents a complete study of the composer, resorting to quotations from other authorities when he needs them for the purpose of completing the picture.

Much original thinking and esthetic research has gone into the making of this book. Witness, for example, Schauffler's animal-versions on the musical setting of poetry—a most stimulating discussion, containing much food for thought, whether or not one agrees with the writer's conclusions.

But if we are aroused by passages of keen insight, we are also disturbed by others of disconcerting futility, such as the occasionally infelicitous similes, and references to pres-

ent-day persons and places which will mean little to readers of a later decade. Furthermore, the author indulges in fruitless reminiscence-hunting, that favorite indoor sport of a certain type of musical mind. This is all the more surprising, because Mr. Schauffler is most assuredly musician enough to realize that certain melodic progressions are the common stock-in-trade of all composers, just as word-phrases are of poets. Some quoted examples are so far-fetched as to be absurd. For example, one motive he calls the "Schein motive" because it occurs in some piece by that composer, whereas it is found frequently in 17th-century music, even before Schein. Ironically, on page 219, Schauffler quotes from a letter of Schumann to Liszt: "Nobody is entirely original".

It is a cause for gratification that Schauffler refutes the charge that Schumann's music is rhythmically monotonous. This is true in some measure, but in his finest and most enduring works he usually gets away from this weakness. But all the great composers, in their less inspired moments, have displayed the same fault in varying degrees. This criticism of Schumann's music appeared originally shortly after his death, and has been repeated parrot-wise by writers who never took the trouble to investigate the subject at first hand, so that the legend has been fairly well established. Some years ago the present reviewer, for the purpose of disproving the charge, made a systematic study of the bulk of Schumann's music, and came to the same conclusions as does Mr. Schauffler, namely, that the passages in Schumann that are too square-cut and rhythmically monotonous occur far more rarely than is generally supposed. But admittedly they go far toward spoiling some of his finest works; for example, the *Piano Quartet*, the *Third String Quartet* and the *Fourth Symphony*. On the other hand, the principal themes of the *Third Symphony*, the *Piano Fantasia* and the *Cello Concerto* belie the claim that Schumann's music is short-winded and rhythmically monotonous.

A far more serious charge (which Mr. Schauffler seems to have overlooked) is Schumann's occasional over-ripe sentimentality bordering on mawkishness, such as one finds in the *Cello Concerto*, the *Andante and Vari-*

*ations* (for two pianos), and the slow movements of the *Piano Quartet* and the *D Minor Violin Sonata*.

Then there is the charge that Schumann was not a symphonist. Granted that he had not the architectonic powers of a half-dozen of his predecessors; but neither had many other composers who are generally considered symphonic writers. The subject is a big one and can not be elaborated upon in a review of this length. It is true, of course, that conductors eschew Schumann because of his ineffective orchestration. They are the orchestral counterparts of pianists who fight shy of the Mozart concertos and the *Well Tempered Clavier*, ignoring intrinsic musical values. But Schumann's orchestration is not actually "bad"—it simply lacks color. In general, there are more flagrant examples of emptiness and bad balance in some of the composers who are ranked ahead of Schumann in other respects.

One of Schumann's virtues, which Schauffler touches upon and which has been too little appreciated before, is, although a negative one, nevertheless worthy of consideration, namely, that Schumann "knew when to stop". Whatever architectonic faults we may find in Schumann (and there are many), redundancy was not one of them, as it is in Schubert and Bruckner, and even Beethoven on occasion. And, lastly, Schumann owned that most essential quality of a truly great artist: he never wrote a note of music that was not sincerely felt.

Schumann's influence on later composers, though not always for the best, was greater than most present-day musicians realize. Mr. Schauffler included, perhaps. He left a definite imprint on such composers as Tchaikovsky, the Russian nationalists, Fauré, Grieg, Franck and the early Strauss. But he was also the fountain-head of hundreds of imitators of his highly original small piano pieces who gave questionable pleasure to legions of amateur pianists during the latter half of the 19th century.

*Florestan* is a valuable addition to any musical library, and a "must" for all lovers of Schumann's subtly intuitive art. It is by far the most satisfactory of the English-language books on this noble and manly composer.

Henry S. Gerstle





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## A TRADITIONAL ROGUE

### Till Eulenspiegel in Literature and Music

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By Sydney Grew

We often say with regard to some particular book, that we envy anyone who is yet to have the joy of reading it for the first time; and we can say the same about Richard Strauss' tone-poem, *Till Eulenspiegel*. It has a literary program: the listener profits by knowledge of the program; and the music is not fully intelligible unless correlated with its story. But the work is bright, active, and rich in tuneful matter of the German folksong type; the form is as clear as a piece of fine architecture; the composer's technique, alike of thought and expression, is masterly; and the dramatic situations and pictorial points, however far they go beyond the ordinary logic of the art of music, do not obscure the musical ideas or upset the form. Therefore Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel* can at first exist for the music lover simply as a splendid orchestral Scherzo,—a piece of high spirited, expressive music, vibrant with youthful energy and glowing with color; and the listener is very fortunate who is in a position to regard it so for a while.

Till Eulenspiegel is a German folk-hero. He was a peasant, born somewhere about

1300, and dying at Moellen, near Luebeck, in 1350. Kneitlingen in Brunswick was his birthplace. There is a passage about him in Carlyle's *German Literature of the 14th and 15th Centuries*:

"We may say that to few mortals has it been granted to earn such a place in universal history as Till; for now, after five centuries, his native village is pointed out with pride to the traveller, and his tombstone, with a sculptured pun on his name (an owl, and a glass), still stands, or pretends to stand, at Moellen, where since 1350 his once nimble bones have been at rest."

Till is indeed one of the rogues who have a place in "universal history". The story of his gaming and jesting, his practical jokes and general bad behavior, became traditional in the 50 years following his death: which was the period when German folk song and poetry rose to their great heights, and when the "comic anecdote" was a popular form of literature.

Thus Till flourished as a tradition in the period of the Mastersingers. The story of him was collected and published in the last quarter of the 15th century, and the book was quickly translated into seven or eight

languages. Editions were published, often with fresh translations, until about 165 years ago: in fact, there was an English edition as late as 1890. [More recently, there have been two children's books on Till published in this country.—Ed.]

In France his name passed into the language. An *espègle* (Ulen Spiegel) is a frolicsome person; and *faire une espèglerie* is to play a waggish trick.

In England he became a typical figure. He was so familiar, what he stood for was so clearly understood, that people could allude to him by name, in the certainty that the allusion would be appreciated. Ben Jonson is the writer who does this the more often. In *The Alchemist*, old Subtle summons his housekeeper, Face, by calling out, "Ulen Spiegel!" In *The Poetaster* there is this passage between Pantilius Tucce and Histrio:

"You did not see me? Where was your sight, Oedipus? You walk with hare's eyes, do you? I'll have them glazed, rogue; an you say the word, they shall be glazed for you: come we must have your turn fiddler again, slave, get a bass viol at your back, and march in a tawny coat, with one sleeve, to Goose-fair; then you'll know us, you'll see us then, you will, gulch, you will. Then, 'Will't please your worship to have any music, captain?'"

Histrio, recipient of this choice outburst, with its dozens of allusions full of point for the Jacobean audience, however blunt to us, makes a murmuring protest; and Tucce starts again:

"What, do you laugh. Howleglas! death, you presumptuous varlet, I am none of your fellows, I have commanded a hundred and fifty such rogues, I."

And so on. Then in *The Sad Shepherd* there is a rather stiff pun which works in the name. Maudlin, the Witch, is cursing her son for his clumsy love-making:

"Thou woo thy love, thy mistress, with twa hedgehogs?

A Stinkard brock, a polecat? out thou houlet!

Thou shouldst have giv'n her a Madge-owl, and then

Thou'dst made a present o' thy self, owl-spigle!"

Till Eulenspiegel represents a certain side of human society in a period of transition. In his time, the townfolk were developing, and they had learned to look down scornfully on the countryfolk. Till,—a true peasant, witty, unscrupulous,—retaliated. He played

the rogue on tradespeople, robbed the inn-keeper, and even worked up tricks upon the higher classes,—priests, magistrates, noblemen, and even princes. It was natural that in this virile period he should become a folk-hero.

He actually died in bed. But Strauss,—for dramatic reasons, and also to enforce the social moral which was one of his aspirations,—makes him a victim of the forces of the law, order and custom which he had ridiculed.

When Franz Wuellner, who was to conduct the first performance of *Till Eulenspiegel*, asked the composer to explain the poetic basis of the work, he had this answer: "It is quite impossible for me to furnish a program. If I put into words the thoughts which the several incidents of the story suggested to me, I could not make the explanation adequate, and I might even give rise to offense. Let me leave it, then, to my hearers themselves to crack the hard nut which the rogue has given them. It must suffice if I point out the two Till motives, which in manifold disguises, moods and situations pervade the work up to the catastrophe when, after he has been condemned to death, Till is strung up by the hangman. For the rest, let your audience guess at the jokes."

This was in the autumn of 1895, the work having been announced as completed during the summer. (People had fancied from the title that it would prove a comic opera.) It was produced at the second of the Guerzenich Concerts for the season of 1895-6 (Nov. 5th). There was another novelty on the program, a piece for chorus and orchestra by a von Othegraven, entitled *Evening on Golgotha*. The good people of Cologne seem to have liked variety, but to some of us the juxtaposition of these two pictures,—medieval Germany, scene of Till's exploits, and Golgotha,—would be a trifle offensive.

The Strauss work was received the next month in Berlin as "music of somewhat questionable beauty". It went at once to Mannheim and other towns, was repeated "by general desire" in Berlin in the February or March, and was recognized by the critics "as bidding fair to attain greater popularity than any of the composer's previous works". Strauss was then just turned 30. The popularity of *Till* has never waned. Von Othegraven's *Golgotha* perhaps never had a second performance.

It was, as I have already shown, Strauss' habit to send out without explanation works written to an elaborate literary program. He used to say, "I want you to listen to the music simply as music, helped only by the title." But by the time a Strauss tone-poem had been in the world a couple of years, it would become adorned with a precise and searching lyrico-dramatic exposition, so that it was, in effect, opera distilled into the smaller receptacle of the symphony.

The composer has been criticized for this habit of his. People have said, "How absurd, to ask us to listen to music written to a program without official information as to what that program is!" But the composer was wiser than his judges. No doubt his keen business instinct prompted him to set the musical world these temporary puzzles, for he knew the puzzle would provoke discussion. Beyond that, however, was the operation of a fine artistic nature. It does not matter how intricately and intimately a piece of music may be "programmatic", in the ultimate issue it must have power of the abstract or pure kind; that is, it must justify and support itself simply as music.

The history of music proves the truth of this statement. As great art escapes the tone and manner of its generation, so it escapes its immediate purpose and intention; in the case of music, it escapes the dogma of its religion, if it is religious music,—its drama, if it is operatic,—and where program music is concerned, it escapes its pictorial and illustrative framework. Knowledge of the dogma, the opera, and the program, are necessary for our full understanding and appreciation of the music, and the more we are imbued with the spirit of the original idea that inspired the creative artist, the more we shall be moved by the work. But none the less the work exists fundamentally in the world that lies beyond this domain of the exact and the tangible; and we are wise to learn a piece of program music first as a piece of ordinary music before we set about learning it otherwise.

Strauss, then, exercised artistic wisdom when he so planned matters that people had to take his works for a time more or less as examples of ordinary music. He also exercised courage, since his works were bound to be misunderstood.

But eventually, when the time seemed

ripe, he would take a copy of the score, write on it the literary or pictorial idea of the different sections and indicate the "happenings" (such as the couple of notes that express Till's execution by hanging\*, and then hand the score to his official commentator for the exposition to be published in a little brochure.

The form of Strauss' tone-poem is that of the sonata: (I) Exposition, (II) Development, (III) Recapitulation. But the Development here consists of variations and episodes and so this second portion of the work is cast into the form of the classical rondo. The Recapitulation is not only a development of the two main themes, but it recovers the subject of one of the episodes of the second portion. Then there are a little Prologue of five bars, and an Epilogue which is an expanded version of the Prologue. (These opening and closing passages are constructed on the second subject.)

The 1st subject and the 2nd are present all through the work. They undergo an amazing number of modifications and adaptations, some of which convert them into melodies of the German folk-song type. New themes appear in the episodes of the second portion of the work; these again are of the German folk-song character.

The following table of the form is disposed on the four parts of the new Victor recording, made by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky (a review of this set will be found elsewhere in this issue):

## SIDE I

### Prologue

#### I. Exposition:

1st subject: to a climax of detached chords, ending on a sustained chord in strings and horns.

2nd subject: clarinet lead, then trombones, etc. This is a lengthy section; it ends with a plain close in F major, the key of the work, out of which the violas continue with a single note.

#### II. Variations and Episodes

Variation No. 1: the music is at first almost Mozartean; then, with a sharp crack, it becomes for a scrambled moment very lively. After a minute break, it continues quietly, but swiftly.

\*There was no hangman's drop in Till's days. Instead, the victim was swung off a cart, and the executioner sat on his or her shoulders to hasten the strangulation. Strauss, picturing the modern drop, commits an anachronism. Few seem to have noticed this point.

### SIDE II

Episode No. 1: as a German folk song. There is a pendant in the form of some sliding chords. The close is a downward glissando in the solo violin.

Variation No. 2: to be recognized immediately as love music. Dignity and strength characterize the latter parts of this section.

Episode No. 2: another chord of quasi-folk song, very different in nature from that of the earlier episode. This episode ends with a trilled chord. Out of the chord comes the most likeable little melody imaginable,—a "street song" idea, which is followed by a bit of contemplative music, which begins toward the end of side two and continues.

### SIDE III

The street song and the meditation form the Bridge to the—

### III. Recapitulation

The 1st subject and the 2nd are announced and developed afresh, as in the Exposition. The first climax contains the 1st subject squared into the plain, straight rhythm of a march.

The Recapitulation continues with a simultaneous working-out of the two subjects. The music is brilliantly *scherzando*.

The second (and last) climax of the Recapitulation begins to repeat the theme of the 1st Episode. But that theme is abruptly cut short, and the Coda starts.

### Coda

The Coda portrays a highly dramatic situation. Yet in the matter of musical construction, it is a solid sequel to the swift and rhapsodical movement of the work up to this point.

### SIDE IV

### Epilogue

First the tender version of the 2nd subject, and then a rapid, lively ending.

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## A SUMMARY TO NEEDLE EXPERIMENTS

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By Mathew T. Jones

The reasons why no specific needles may be recommended for given records should be obvious from my article (September issue) and from the following discussion in regard to my own experiences.

It is my contention that no pickup that requires more than two ounces of needle pressure to track properly should be used with permanent needles; steel or fibre (thorn) needles changed frequently are probably the best that can be used with such pickups. Of the lighter pickups, it will prove difficult to obtain clear sound reproduction with some owing to inadequate design; many of the pickups built into record changers are in this class. Crystal pickups require careful selection of the cartridges because there exists great variation in these, even of a given model; some produce considerable distortion. Pickups that have been tried by me and their characteristics observed are described below.

1. Astatic B-10. This arm is well designed but the B-2 cartridge requires too much needle pressure and exhibits a bad peak around 3000 to 4000 cycles, which makes for a screaming tone with a high fidelity sound

system. The head, however, can be easily modified to accommodate the Astatic L-25 cartridge, which is free of the peaks and which can be operated at a lighter needle pressure. The arm should be counterbalanced to one and a quarter to one and one-half ounces needle pressure for Star Sapphire needles (and probably for any similar semi-permanent type of needle), and to one and three-quarters ounces pressure for straight, short needles. With this combination, the quality of sound reproduction is generally excellent, and interchangeable needles allow choosing the right needle to fit the groove.

2. Astatic FP-18. This, in my estimation, is the best of the permanent units with a built-in needle, outside of some of the very expensive magnetic units. It produces no tracking difficulties in spite of the one-ounce needle pressure and the point radius is right for more than half of the commercial records. However, needle life is only 300 to 500 double-faced 12-inch records and replacement is expensive (\$8.00). The wider-range FP-38 unit possesses no advantage over the FP-18 as far as commercial recordings are concerned.

3. Audak Pro-2. This is my choice as by far the best pickup for use with commercial records but great care must be taken in its handling and the associated equipment must be suitable. Since this pickup is made at a low impedance, it requires a transformer to alter the impedance. It is not a unit for general public use because of its delicateness, moreover the average radio-phonograph possesses insufficient gain and bass boost to use it successfully. However, the manufacturer is most cooperative and quite honest in his statements regarding its function on a given machine. The Audak Pro-2 has produced no tracking difficulties with any shape or size of needle and the life of a Star Sapphire properly used in it seems to be in excess of 1000 double-faced 12-inch records. In spite of its wide range (flat to 8500 cycles), hiss and scratch are materially less than with crystal units of lesser range. The L-18 Audak unit gives good results also and is less delicate but its higher needle pressure reduces needle life and the frequency response is not as uniform.

4. Brush PL-20. This unit sounds no better than the Astatic FP-18 or FP-38 units and is subject to considerable tracking difficulties. It is very sensitive to levelling and vibration which sometimes causes groove jumping. It also requires a factory job to change needles, which last 300 to 500 double-faced 12-inch records. The cost is \$4.00.

In using the Astatic B-10, L-25 combination or the Audak Pro-2 pickups, the following is my experience with needles.

#### 1. Interchangeable Needles.

(a) Metal. All cause considerably more record wear than sapphire or fibre (thorn) needles and generally do not give as clear reproduction. My opinion is that if the needle wears to fit the groove according to the accepted theory, the particles of metal and record material that must be ground off are left in the grooves. The needle can quickly develop a sharp cutting edge which can dig the grooves, particularly in loud passages. However, Victor Red Seal needles are considered by many as best where a large needle radius is called for, and Duotone filter point or shadowgraphed needles where a small radius is required. Needles must be changed very often at much shorter intervals than most manufacturers recommend.

(b) Fibre or Thorn. These needles can be very good and cause little record wear if the following precautions are taken. The needles must be thoroughly dehydrated by keeping in a dessicator until the moment of use (see my article in the September issue). A particular sharpening technique must be developed which uses very light pressure with a good rotation sharpener. This type of needle must be sharpened at least every two sides and preferably every side. Thorn needles will not work well in any event with records that require a large point radius. With the above conditions met, thorns have caused no perceptible wear. A slight boost of the treble tone control is necessary for the best frequency response. In humid weather, it will be found impossible to maintain the needle point sufficiently dehydrated and reproduction will suffer accordingly. The best results have been obtained by me from Duotone Cactus and by others with the B.C.N. Emerald; satisfactory results on occasion have been got by me from Kacti and Greythorne needles. Many others currently on the market are not satisfactory. Since thorns in constant use generate heat which is not dispersed as with a steel needle, and since they require sharpening constantly, their use in a changer cannot be completely endorsed.

#### 2. Permanent Needles.

(a) Precious Metal. Because of short life, erratic point shape or poor design, few of these are satisfactory. However, the Fidelitone "Floating Point" needle seems best, but it has an objectionable peak around 3000 to 4000 cycles. I am told that the Fidelitone "Master" is preferable and does not have this peak, moreover that it is more uniform in size and better polished, but I have not to date made any tests with this newer needle. The Pfanstiehl needle gives scratchy, distorted reproduction and wears rapidly as well. I found its maximum life ran around 100 double-faced 12-inch records, and in some cases it lasted only 50 double-faced sides.

(b) Jewel Points. The Duotone Star Sapphire is the only satisfactory needle I have found. The Walco Trutrac is fairly good where a .0025 to .0030" radius is desired but is too bulky, and has too much offset. Moreover, I am given to understand that this needle has been known to break in changer

(Continued on page 56)

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## FROM DUET TO SEXTET

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By Stephen Fassett

### Part 4

In January 1908 Victor released two of the recordings that the celebrated Italian baritone, Mattia Battistini, had recently made for The Gramophone Company in Milan. The European editions bore orange labels instead of the usual red ones, a special classification which Battistini, who regarded himself as the king of baritones, had demanded and received because he felt his discs should be distinguished from those of other singers. But if the Victor officials had ever heard of this agreement between Battistini and their allied company, they ignored it; in the United States Battistini was a red seal artist whether he liked it or not.

What concerns us now, however, is not the color of the labels but the quality of the performances. First to be considered is *Lo vedremo, o veglio audace* from *Ernani*, which Battistini sings with compelling vitality, in company with a basso named Aristodemo Sillich, on Victor 92007. Sillich, who appeared in minor roles with the Boston Opera during the 1912-13 season, does an admirable job, too. Unfortunately, the recording fails to release Battistini's voice in its full glory and his tone is undoubtedly falsely attenuated as it sounds here. Incidentally, for some reason this duet keeps reminding me

of *Ah, sweet mystery of life* and I can never hear it without wondering if Victor Herbert was familiar with it.

The other record, *Vieni meco sol di rose* (92008), also from *Ernani*, was always listed as a duet with Emilia Corsi (sister of the famous Pini-Corsi brothers) but I have never been able to regard it as anything but one of the most magnificently sung baritone solos I have ever heard. If Emilia Corsi sings even one note on this record, it has remained inaudible to me throughout countless hearings. A glance at the score might prove enlightening, of course, but I haven't access to one just now. Anyway, the important thing is the rare beauty of Battistini's singing, which is unlike anything to be heard from modern singers. In my recent *Fifty Great Vocal Records* series, I praised this record highly, for collectors have long recognized it not only as one of Battistini's best but also as one of the best baritone recordings ever made. Its only drawback, as far as I am concerned, is the painfully inadequate reproduction of the chorus and orchestra.

Victor published no red seal recordings of concerted music in February 1908, but in March came a pair of discs on which Bessie Abott and Mario Ancona sang *Tutte le feste* (89013) and *Si vendetta* (87500) from *Rigo-*

letto. They are rare in their original form and I have heard only *Tutte le feste* which was revived by IRCC some years ago. Since I have seldom felt any urge to go back to this recording for a re-hearing, I can hardly recommend it as outstanding. However, I must confess that the music has always bored me.

The version of the *Quintet* from *Die Meistersinger* (95201) which Victor issued in April 1908 is one of those discs that collectors like to own more for the impressive array of names on its label than for its quality as a musical reproduction. To hear Gadski, Reiss, Mattfeld, Van Hoose and Journet sing this sublime music on the stage of the Metropolitan must have been a satisfying experience (though one could think of a stronger cast), but the same cannot be said of their recording. Evidently Wagner and the acoustic system of recording were not meant for each other.

Another April disc was the second red seal performance of the *Rigoletto Quartet* (96001). As in the earlier version, the tenor and baritone parts were sung by Caruso and Scotti, but this time Bessie Abbott was replaced by Marcella Sembrich, Louise Homer by Severina. It was a highly successful record, of course, and took its place beside the 1907 version, without, however, displacing it from the catalog. Also the series featuring Farrar as *Madame Butterfly* was continued with an appealing performance of *Ora a noi*, sung on 89014 with Antonio Scotti.

In May, the first seven-dollar record failed to discourage the buying public, who continued to purchase it by the thousand for many years to come. It was, need I say, the *Sextet* from *Lucia* (96200), sung by Caruso, Sembrich, Scotti, Journet, Severina and Daddi, of which only the first four were star performers.

When Caruso and Sembrich had sung *Lucia* at the Metropolitan that year, they created a sensation. The police had to be called in. Caruso, with his glorious organ, was equally sensational as a recording artist but Sembrich, who was past her prime by 1908, was not. Naturally, therefore, on this record he is heard to better advantage than Sembrich, although the voice of the great Polish soprano occasionally emerges with serene loveliness, and one feels that her presence in the *Sextet* was all to the good.

Caruso, for example, sings his part with more smoothness, taste and refinement than in his later versions of 1912 and 1917. Who knows, perhaps he was conscious of the stern eye of Sembrich and accordingly was careful to avoid the exaggerations that sometimes marred his style, in order to match her purer conception of *bel canto*. The other singers, Journet in particular, are excellent, and as a mechanical reproduction the record is remarkable.

One of the most inspired quartet recordings Victor ever released was *Addio dolce svegliare* from *Bohème*, sung by Farrar, Caruso, Viafora and Scotti. While Caruso is a bit thinly recorded, the balance among the four voices is excellent, and Farrar and Caruso sing with such warmth and sweetness that they really sound like young lovers. Caruso's tenderly inflected phrases, pure and smooth, are infinitely more moving than anything to be found in the records he made when in the mood to tear passion to tatters. Farrar's singing is equally praiseworthy, for here she is heard at her very best. Viafora manages Musetta's spiteful laugh with delightful spontaneity; and Scotti, of course, was a perfect Marcello. Another echo of the Metropolitan's famous *Bohème* productions of long ago is the rendition of *Mimi io son* (89016) by Farrar and Scotti, which was released at this time. The pathos of Farrar's Mimi and the sympathetic quality of Scotti's Marcello are memorably served in this record.

Caruso, although he soon relinquished the role to the American tenor Riccardo Martin, was the Metropolitan's first Pinkerton; thus, he was the logical choice to record with Farrar *O quanti occhi fissi*, the last portion of the love-duet that concludes the first act of *Madama Butterfly* (89017 or 8011). Alas, the splendor of the singing is dimmed by thin recording, and I, for one, have never found it a satisfying souvenir. Nor can I recommend its acquisition on the strength of the story of some foolish words Miss Farrar is supposed to have sung in her first utterance. The words she sings are those in the score: "Sì, per la vita"; anything else interpolated is a trick of the imagination.

The role of the Countess in Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* was one of the outstanding achievements of the superb Emma Eames. Sembrich's Susanna was also highly regarded

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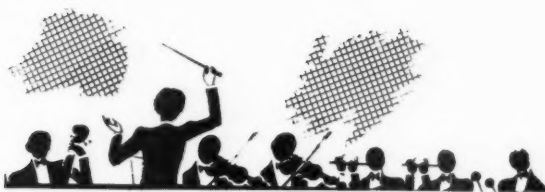
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### Orchestra

**ADDINSELL:** *Warsaw Concerto* (from the Republic Picture *Suicide Squadron*); played by Leo Litwin (piano), the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Fiedler. Victor dis 11-8863, price \$1.00.

▲ There's no question of the popularity of this music. It is quite useless to point out that the composer owes Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky and others a debt; it is this very fact that doubtless makes the music so instantly appealing. It cannot be denied that Addinsell devised a good tune and that he exploited it in a way calculated to assure box-office receipts. Those who have wanted a really first-rate performance of this music will be

delighted with the one that Mr. Litwin, Mr. Fiedler and the Boston "Pops" give here; they manage to bring some of the atmosphere of the concert hall to their performance, and the recorders have done a "live" job on the reproduction. —P.G.

**BIZET:** *Music from Carmen—Prelude, Aragonaise, Intermezzo, Dragoons of Alcala, Nocturne, Bullfight, Habanera, Changing the Guard, March of the Smugglers, Minuet and Farandole* (derived from *L'Arlesienne Suite*), *Gypsy Dance*; played by the New York City Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Victor Set M or DM-1002, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ Unquestionably, Stokowski has a flair for colorful music of this kind, but he also has some arbitrary ideas of his own regarding tempi and phrasing. Back in the days when the conductor was associated with the Philadelphia Orchestra he made some selections from *Carmen* which are, in our estimation, much to be preferred to these recordings. The Philadelphia Orchestra played on pitch and none of its musicians were guilty of interpolating wrong notes, as some of the present ones are. The recording of the above set is impressive on occasion and strangely blurred and unbalanced on other occasions. It seems strange to us that Stokowski approved this set. —P.H.R.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF: *Le Coq d'or*—*Suite*; played by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, direction of Dimitri Mitropoulos. Columbia set X or MX-254, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ Rimsky-Korsakoff, in arranging his orchestral suite from *Le Coq d'or*, stressed the fantastic element of the music rather than the lyrical. On the stage, this opera has always seemed to me a work of great charm, and in former days when it was produced at the Metropolitan as an opera-pantomime with Adolf Bolm and Rosina Galli miming the parts and such singers as Adamo Didur and Maria Barrientos singing from the sidelines, the effect of the whole was an amusing and delightful spectacle. The story is, of course, a fairy tale, written by Pushkin, but when the opera is produced with the singers acting the parts, it is not as successful as it is when given as an opera-pantomime. All this, of course, has nothing to do with the suite the composer arranged for concert performance. The musical substance of the opera is delightfully written, combining Rimsky-Korsakoff's best pseudo-oriental characteristics with some charming melodies. But divorced from the theatre, this music is more a *pièce d'occasion* than an enduring musical work. The listener who has never seen the opera can hardly appreciate fully the composer's skill in drawing a musical portrait in a few notes, or the significance of his motives.

In November 1938, Victor brought out a recording of the complete suite, played by the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Goossens (set 504—still listed in the catalogue). Goossens gave a sparkling performance of this music, but he did not have the bright quality of reproduction to be found here. Mitropoulos shortens the suite considerably; the excellent notes in the album state that in concert performances this is usually done, but I cannot remember ever hearing the suite performed in public except as the composer arranged it. However, it must be said that drawing this score a little closer together helps rather than hinders it; the original suite seems a little long. Mitropoulos' performance is a sensitive one; he outlines the refined and colorful orchestration in a tasteful and discerning manner. The reproduction is good, but somehow the

Minneapolis Orchestra does not come off records quite as auspiciously as the Philadelphia and the Philharmonic. —P.H.R.

STRAUSS, Richard: *Till Eulenspiegel, Opus 28 (Tone Poem)*; played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, direction of Serge Koussevitzky. Victor Plastic Set DV-1, two discs, price \$4.50.

▲ The quality of this performance is definitely enhanced by the new plastic surfaces. It is a joy to turn one's "highs" up to the fullest and sit back and never hear the sibilant hiss of the needle. Moreover, it is no illusion that the wind instruments and the percussion are heard to greater advantage from this recording. Koussevitzky's performance of Strauss' finest tone poem is both vital and impelling; I particularly like the rhythmic liveness of his interpretation. The humor is nicely pointed up; even in the ponderous orchestral effects it is not here permitted to be lost in a weighty mass of complex sounds as it is with many conductors. *Till* requires a spontaneity and continuity of utterance, a virtuoso performance that is ever alert and alive. Mr. Koussevitzky achieves all of this, and much more too in its projection here, aided by the fine reproductive quality of the plastic disc. I have always admired Furtwaengler's performance of this work, but now that I hear the Koussevitzky version I realize that the German conductor with all his infinite care in outlining the various inuendoes of the score does not begin to get the spontaneity of performance that Koussevitzky obtains. How much more alive this version is than the Fritz Busch performance, which in its day evoked universal praise, and how much more vital and imaginative it is in comparison with Rodzinski's version, which on its own terms nevertheless remains an admirable exposition of the score. —P.H.R.

THOMSON: *Five Portraits*; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction of Virgil Thomson. Columbia set X-255, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ The five pieces, which the composer has very cleverly devised and scored, are really studies in a free style; even the final Portrait—marked *Fugue*—does not pursue a strict formal pattern. The people who inspired these portraits are not all well known public

figures, and the composer feels that the interest of these pieces for the musical public at large depends mainly on what intrinsic merit they may be found to possess. This is all very well but the fact that each piece bears a title and carries the name of its subject is bound to arouse curiosity in the mind of the listener. To be sure, some of the people are of no concern to the listener, but as one friend of mine puts it: "I'd like to know why the lady for whom *Percussion Piece* was written deserved such a piece, or why a *Tango Lullaby* is representative of Mlle. de Tolédo."

Mr. Thomson intimates that these pieces reveal the personality of their subject. He tells us that "The subject sits for his likeness as he would for a painter, and the music is composed in front of him, usually at one sitting. Orchestral scoring is worked out in detail later." The pieces are: *Bugles and Birds*, a portrait of the painter Pablo Picasso; *Percussion Piece*, depicting a Mrs. Lasell of Massachusetts; *Cantabile for Strings*, describing a young painter of Russian birth, Nicolas de Chatelain; *Tango Lullaby*, a portrait of a young girl Mlle. de Tolédo (now Mme. Cazelles); *Fugue*, representing the American conductor Alexander Smallens.

Thomson is witty and pungent in his first two selections; in the *Cantabile for Strings* his melodic restraint recalls similar music of the Russians; the *Tango Lullaby* has a French flavor; and the *Fugue* portrays the bustling energetic character of its subject. These pieces are ingenious; they are also inconclusive since they all end in a manner that suggests the composer has left something unsaid. Their appeal lies mainly, for me, in their fascinating scoring. How effective and appropriate the pieces are will depend on the receptivity of the listener. The recording is excellently accomplished. —P.H.R.

#### Concerto

MENDELSSOHN: *Concerto in E minor, Opus 64* (7 sides); played by Nathan Milstein (violin), with Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, direction of Bruno Walter, and *Scherzo from Midsummer Night's Dream* (1 side); played by the orchestra, direction of Mr. Walter. Columbia set M or MM-577, price \$4.50.

▲ It seems only yesterday that we were reviewing Szigeti's performance of this work and then Kreisler's re-recording, which came some months later, but actually it was all of ten years ago that these two recordings were released. Menuhin's version came in February 1939, but it failed to shake the enduring interest in the Szigeti and Kreisler sets. I am sure a large audience has been awaiting this set, for Milstein is one of the great violin virtuosi of our times; in the past half-dozen years he has established himself as one of the most popular artists in our concert halls. After listening to this performance, in which the solo line is both brilliantly and smoothly played and the orchestral part evidences an appreciable understanding of the romanticism of the music, I find myself in admiration of it, despite the fact that it is a more highly tempered performance than is usually heard. Perhaps no violinist ever projected an atmosphere and personality of his own as strongly as Kreisler did; his playing of this concerto was filled with a tonal magic that was both individual and elusive, but his performance was all solo, for the orchestral accompaniment was a routine affair relegated too much to the background in the recording. The polished suavity and nuanced subtlety of Szigeti's rendition, backed by Beecham's sympathetic treatment of the or-

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chestral ensemble, has always seemed to me to sustain interest better than any other performance including the present.

In the past, I have remarked that Kreisler, with his sentient lyricism, perhaps realized the essence of the music's serenity and charm more truly than anyone else. Milstein's is a different approach, and on its own deserving of admiration. This work does not require any true depth of feeling; the sentiment is affable and refined. There is a touch of melancholy but this does not go very deep. The work is stylistically polished and calculated to permit the soloist to exploit beauty of tone. Milstein has the essential beauty of tone, which in itself supplies sufficient emotion; both he and Walter bring more sentiment to their playing of the *Andante* than do Szigeti and Beecham, but the emotion is not excessive. Walter, with his predilection for romantic music, feels the melancholy qualities of the work more than most conductors. His performance of the famous Mendelssohn *Scherzo* on the last record side is an appreciable encore.

Choice among the several performances of this work will be mainly governed by the listener's preference for the soloist. However, it would be well if all listeners heard the various performances before buying. Milstein has the benefit of much finer reproduction than his predecessors, indeed in regard to tonal naturalness and balance this set is tops.

—P.H.R.

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### Instrumental

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BEETHOVEN (arr. Stutschewsky and Thaler): *Sonatine* (Originally for mandoline and cembalo); and GLAZOUNOFF: *Chant de Menestrel*; played by Edmund Kurtz (cello) and Emanuel Bay (piano). Victor disc 11-8815, price \$1.00.

▲ The Beethoven piece was written in his early twenties; its publication date is given as 1795. Although it belongs in the chamber music category, it is of such slight consequence that one wonders why the two arrangers spent the time to alter the music. Beethoven's insistence on the main theme, which is of a sentimental genre, may well appeal to people who cannot stomach his

stronger fare, but those of us who know and admire his best chamber music will hardly rate this sonatine among his first-class compositions. Kurtz, one of the most admirable cellists of our time, plays this piece with suave tone and appreciable expression. Glazounoff's *Song of the Minstrel* lacks distinction; it remains, in my estimation, one of those song-like compositions that permit a soloist to exploit tonal beauty and nothing else. Mr. Kurtz, I am sure, plays it well, and Mr. Bay gives him competent support in both this piece and the Beethoven. The recording is good.

—P.H.R.

CELLO MELODIES: *The Swan* (St.-Saens); *Waltz* (arr. Feuermann from Chopin's *Waltz in A minor*); *Preislied* from *Die Meistersinger* (Wagner-Wilhelmj); *Tannhaeuser* — *To the Evening Star* (Wagner); *Largo* from *Concerto in A* (C.P.E. Bach); *Malaguena* (Albéniz, arr. Stutschewsky and Thaler); played by Raya Garbousova (cello), with Erich-Igor Kahn at the piano. Victor set M-1017, three discs, price \$3.50.

▲ The tone Mme. Garbousova draws from her cello is warm and vibrant; when it is steady, she plays with admirable musicianship, and, where others would be tempted in many of these selections to become unduly lush, she avoids excess sentiment. St.-Saens' romantic *Swan* is played with restraint; the famous bird is given some dignity. The Wagnerian excerpts, except for some slight deviations in intonation, are nicely played, thus sustaining their musical interest and worth in arrangements. The most appreciable selection in the album is the lovely *Largo* of Philipp Emanuel Bach; it is played with sensitivity and tonal beauty both by the cellist and her able and talented accompanist. It speaks well for Albéniz's *Malaguena* that it lends itself well to transcription, and although the violin would serve it much better it nonetheless emerges in an engaging manner from the cello. Mr. Kahn is a fine artist in his own right, a true partner in every sense of the word in those selections that demand partnership. It would be interesting to hear these two artists in other music; no matter how well the first four excerpts are played their appeal is limited in transcriptions; most of us prefer them in their original form. The last two selections

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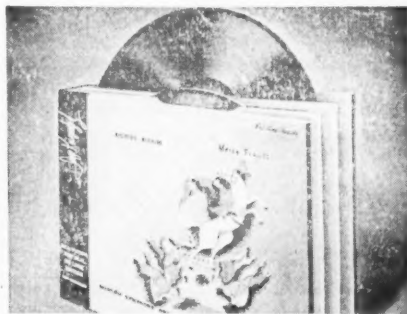
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would be my chosen disc in the album; they alone assure continuing interest. The reproduction here is unusually realistic, and the balance of the two instruments is praiseworthy. —P.H.R.

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### Keyboard

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DEBUSSY: *Clair de lune*; and LISZT: *Liebestraum No. 3*; played by José Iturbi (piano). Victor disc 11-8851, price \$1.00.

▲ Mr. Iturbi's vast new audience, gained through his Hollywood performances, will undoubtedly pounce on this disc with great delight; their idol has performed two old favorites and that in itself will be enough. Just how well he plays these pieces will likely not concern them, but it will concern others. Those who heard Brailowsky's recent performance of the ubiquitous *Dream of Love* and the Victor recording of the Debussy piece played by E. Robert Schmitz (no. 11-8240) will immediately recognize their superiority. Schmitz's playing of *Clair de lune* is exquisitely shaded, the tonal delicacy is a sheer delight, and the recorders have caught and conveyed the pianist's mood in a wholly appreciable manner. Many of us have grown tired of this music, but Schmitz makes us realize what a fine composition it can be when imaginatively performed. Mr. Iturbi plays it as though he were tired of it, as though it stirred no imaginative qualities in him; where Schmitz achieves poetry he is simply matter of fact. In the Liszt piece, Mr. Iturbi disturbingly makes me conscious that he no longer plays as he used to. The recording here does the pianist justice.

—P.H.R.

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### Voice

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GOLDEN MOMENTS OF SONG: *O sole mio* (di Capua); *Torna a Sorrento* (de Curtis); *La Danza* (Rossini); *Mattinata* (Leoncavallo); sung by Jan Peerce (tenor), with Victor Orchestra conducted by Maximilian Pilzer. Victor Showpiece Set 8, two 10-inch discs, price \$1.75.

▲ Mr. Peerce sings these popular Italian

songs as if to the manner born, with vibrant and full-throated tones of the type that inevitably evoke loud and long applause from audiences in Italy as well as this country. Pilzer gives good but discreet accompaniments, and the reproduction is first-rate.

—P.G.

FRENCH OPERATIC ARIAS: *Amadis—Bois épais* (Lully); *Richard, Cœur de Lion—Blondel's Air* (Grétry); *La Damnation de Faust—Mephistopheles' Air* (*Voici des Roses*) (Act II), *Serenade* (Act III), *Chanson de la Puce* (Act II); *Roméo et Juliette—Ballade de la Reine Mab* (Gounod); *Hamlet—Chanson Bachique* (Thomas); *Hérodiade—Vision fugitive* (Massenet); *Les Contes d'Hoffman—Scintille diamant* (Offenbach); *Carmen—Chanson du Toréador* (Bizet); sung by Martial Singher (baritone), with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, conducted by Paul Breisch. Columbia set M-578, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ Ever since Martial Singher made his debut in January 1944 at the Metropolitan Opera House in the difficult role of Pelléas, he has been acclaimed for his fine musicianship and expressive singing. His voice is a lyric baritone which he employs with taste. Where others who have larger voices can make big climaxes, Mr. Singher has to rely on his artistry. His singing is never sensational but refined. He begins with Lully's famous *Bois épais*, which he sings with quiet dignity. In the Grétry aria, where Blondel consoles his King by attesting his allegiance, he sings with true compassion. One is glad to see this baritone reviving interest in Berlioz's music; he makes us realize how unjustly neglected this composer's vocal music is. Despite Gounod's *Serenade* in *Faust* and Moussorgsky's effective setting of *The Song of the Flea*, Berlioz's two similar selections are ingeniously conceived and worth knowing. Singher does not quite have the vocal brilliance to make Thomas' *Drinking Song* from *Hamlet* or the *Toreador's Song* from *Carmen* as effective as others do, but he sings them with admirable taste. Massenet intended more emotion in his Herod than Singher brings to his *Vision fugitive*, but again one admires him for his artistry. It is seldom that one hears Dapertutto's aria from *The Tales of Hoffmann* sung apart from the opera. It is

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not a great aria but can be enormously effective when sung by a singer with a larger voice. Singher does not have sufficient intensity for this aria; its climaxes demand a more virtuoso style than he possesses, but here again he makes us realize what a true artist can do.

The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, under the able direction of Mr. Breisach, provides the baritone with acceptable accompaniments. The recording is admirably accomplished.

—P.H.R.

KERN: *The Jockey on the Carousel*, from *I Dream Too Much*; and FRIML: *L'Amour, toujours l'amour*; sung by Lily Pons (soprano), with orchestra, conducted by Maurice Abravanel. Columbia disc 71698-D, price \$1.00.

▲ Miss Pons should sing more lyric songs like Friml's, for they best reveal the beauty of her voice. Of course, she can ascend into alt with "the greatest of ease", but coloratura acrobatics do not reveal the lady's charm. Kern's *The Jockey on the Carousel* is an infectious piece and Miss Pons sings it with vivacity and tonal luster, aided by a male chorus which boasts a couple of good soloists. Miss Pons sings both songs in English with a quaint accent; her diction is better in the Friml. Mr. Abravanel gives the singer good orchestral backgrounds and the recording is realistic.

—P.G.

LILY PONS PROGRAM: *Rigoletto—Caro nome* (Verdi); *Theme and Variations* (Proch); *Le Perle du Brésil—Charmant oiseau* (David); sung by Miss Pons, with orchestra conducted by Pietro Cimara. Columbia M or MM-582, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.75.

▲ The purely lyrical singing of Miss Pons reveals an ingratiating tone that is particularly pleasing. Although the singer accomplishes all her vocal acrobatics here with accuracy, there is not always the feeling of ease. Returning to Miss Pons' 1931 recording of *Caro nome*, made for Victor (disc 7383), one finds much to admire in the more sympathetic quality here of her middle voice, but her coloratura work lacks the spontaneity found in the earlier disc. In Proch's *Air and Variations*, which so many coloraturas like to use

in the lesson scene in *The Barber of Seville*, Miss Pons is at her best; here her singing is warmly expressive in the opening Air and charmingly capricious in the variations. In David's pseudo-oriental *Charmant oiseau*, which seems to be the only piece that keeps his name alive these days, Miss Pons meets all the requirements of the music, vying with an unnamed flutist at the end in the traditional manner of all coloraturas. Since this album represents Miss Pons at her best it is most unfortunate that the three selections were divided into two parts on 10-inch discs. The break in *Caro nome* is simply atrocious, the one in the Proch somewhat disturbing, and the one in the David aria the least offensive. The recording does justice to the singer, although there was some needle distortion on a few sides.

—P.G.

MOZART: *Le Nozze di Figaro—Porgi amor, and Dove sono*; sung by Eleanor Steber (soprano), with Victor Orchestra, conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. Victor disc 11-8850, price \$1.00.

▲ Miss Steber's singing of the two arias of the Countess Almaviva are so beautifully ac-

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complished with such admirable taste and musicianship that one hesitates to compare her artistry with others. Yet the recording of these arias by that gifted soprano, Tiana Lemnitz, who was scheduled to appear at the Metropolitan in 1938, when her disc (No. 15178) was issued by Victor, intrudes itself in our memory. Moreover the temperament of the Countess comes under consideration. She is one of the most passionate and earnest women in all Mozart's operas, yet she is far less complex than many of his women characters. She wears her heart upon her sleeve and her emotions are poured forth in both of her arias without repression or shame. Any other composer but Mozart would have probably succumbed to bathos in these scenes, but not so Mozart—he has given the Countess two tender and rarely expressive arias. Lemnitz had the dark luscious beauty of tone that is usually associated with the Countess. Rethberg in her prime had the requisite emotional appeal. Rautawaara, in the complete recording of this opera, also has the essential warmth. "Porgi amor" is an aria of day-dreaming; the Countess expresses the sadness of her realization that her youthful hopes of married bliss are not completely to be achieved. Miss Steber's singing recalls that of Emma Eames; it is exquisitely molded, it is tonally beautiful, her use of the appoggiatura is especially laudable, but one feels that a warmer, more intimate style is required here to convey the temperament of the character. Miss Lemnitz had the requisite feeling, but unfortunately in her singing of this aria and in "Dove sono" she evidenced a vibrato which was often displeasing. That Miss Steber sings with admirable steadiness as well as beauty of tone places her readings of these arias well in the forefront of recorded versions; and regardless of any emotional reticence remain estimable Mozart singing.

It is a pity that "Dove sono" was not recorded in its entirety. It is one of the finest operatic scenes—in many respects "one of the loftiest lyrical episodes in 18th-century opera", as Sydney Grew said in his analysis of this scene in our August 1943 issue (*AML*). The recitative, omitted here and in the Lemnitz disc, is a very definite and dramatic part of the emotional scheme of the whole scene. In it the Countess bares her heart, expresses her sorrowful feelings over her

husband's infidelity. In the aria proper, she voices the sorrows of a woman who is willing to suffer but who still has hopes. This whole scene is one conceived in the grand manner, like Weber's "Ocean, thou mighty monster" and Leonore's great aria from *Fidelio*. Without its recitative it falls short, particularly since no preparation, as in "Porgi amor", is given the singer.

Despite the above remarks it is impossible not to admire the artistry of Miss Steber, which is evidenced here in a more appreciable way than in anything she has accomplished to date for the phonograph. The orchestral background is effectively if not imaginatively accomplished, and the recording is tonally natural and praiseworthy. —P.H.R.

**MARJORIE LAWRENCE SINGS FOR THE BOYS:** *Waltzing Matilda* (*Paterson*); *Annie Laurie* (*Traditional*); *The Lord's Prayer* (*Malotte*); *Danny Boy* (*Traditional*); *My Hero from The Chocolate Soldier* (*Straus*); *Maori Farewell* (*Kaihu*); *Auld Lang Syne* (*Traditional*); sung by Marjorie Lawrence (soprano), with orchestra conducted by Sylvan Shulman. Columbia set M-579, price \$3.50.

▲ Despite her handicap, caused by infantile paralysis with which she was stricken in 1941, Marjorie Lawrence has continued to sing before the public. In 1944, she flew to the Pacific war zone to entertain our fighting men and those of England, Holland and Australia. She travelled over 50,000 miles and sang for more than twice that number of men. This album is a program of songs such as Miss Lawrence sang on her tour, presented in much the same manner, no doubt, except for the orchestral background. In the two songs from her native Australia, *Waltzing Matilda* and *Maori Farewell*, she is backed by a male quartet; in the others she sings alone. Miss Lawrence seems to have favored a mezzo-soprano range for all these songs, with the result that her voice does not exhibit the brilliance of the old days when she was in opera. She sings with much feeling and earnest desire to please, and one can well believe she brought great pleasure to our boys overseas. Miss Lawrence was fortunate in getting Mr. Shulman for her orchestral director; he provides "live" orchestral accompaniments. The recording is tonally good. —P.G.

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THOMAS: *Mignon—Je suis Titania (Pol-  
onaise)*; and RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF: *Le  
Coq d'Or—Salut à toi, soleil*; sung by  
Patricia Munsel (soprano), with Victor  
Orchestra, conducted by Sylvan Levin.  
Victor disc 11-8886, price \$1.00.

▲ From her first appearance at the Metro-  
politon Opera House, Miss Munsel has shown  
great promise. Her extreme youth has made  
the routine of opera often difficult for her to  
surmount with consistently good results in  
her singing. On the air, however, she has  
shown that she is an unusually endowed  
coloratura soprano, and these records sustain  
that impression. Her youthful élan and  
tonal assurance are gifts that have been un-  
fortunately wanting in too many artists in  
her category. Her most remarkable singing  
here is in the "Hymn to the Sun" from *The  
Golden Cockerel*. The difficult passage at the  
end is encompassed with the utmost ease and  
with admirable tonal steadiness. Rimsky-  
Korsakoff supplied the Queen in this opera  
with a florid air designed primarily to dis-  
play the lyric and coloratura gifts of the  
singer, rather than the sophisticated and  
fantastic character of the Queen. Miss Mun-  
sel's Philine is a young, vivacious creature,  
quite in keeping with Thomas' conception;  
she tosses off the difficult fioratura with  
sparkle and buoyancy. There is some sug-  
gestion that her support is not yet developed  
to permit the fullest brilliancy in her singing,  
but again the accuracy of her intonation and  
the attention to detail is laudable. Although  
the singer has style, one feels that this will  
improve as her artistry matures.

It is hardly fair to compare this singer  
with the great artists of the past, for she has  
a definite place in the opera house and con-  
cert hall of our time. Time alone will tell  
whether she has truly inherited the mantle  
of the great singers who essayed the same  
roles in the past. Her "Hymn to the Night"  
stands up against any recording of it I have  
heard. The orchestral background is ac-  
ceptably handled, but the body of tone is  
thinner than I would have liked. The fine  
grooving of this disc will be best served by  
a fine pointed needle. The recording is ex-  
cellent

—P.G.

WAGNER: *Tannhaeuser—Wohl wuesst' ich  
hier sie im Gebet zu finden*, and *Recitative*

and *Air—O du mein holder Abendstern  
(Act III)*; sung by Herbert Janssen (bari-  
tone); with Orchestra of the Colon Opera  
House, Buenos Aires, conducted by Ro-  
berto Kinsky (in the former), and the  
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, conducted  
by Paul Breisch (in the latter). Columbia  
disc 71697-D, price \$1.00.

▲ The first is Wolfram's Entry music at the  
beginning of Act III; at its termination the  
chorus of Pilgrims is heard off stage. Wagner  
made Wolfram a person of earnest sentiment,  
and Janssen brings this quality to his singing  
of the part. I find his *Wohl wuesst' ich hier*  
less persuasively sung than his *O du mein  
holder Abendstern*; the voice is steadier in the  
latter. Indeed, he sings the famous Ode to  
the Evening Star with artistic nobility, giv-  
ing an air that is all too frequently treated  
as a "Sunday-evening concert piece" the

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requisite dignity to sustain the listener's admiration. Janssen sang both these selections previously in the Bayreuth recording of *Tannhaeiser*, at a time when his voice was a more flexible organ than it is today. But in the *Evening Star*, even here, Janssen shows that he is still one of the finest living interpreters of Wolfram. The recording in both cases is good. Of the two sides, I think Breisach and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra acquit themselves better than Kinsky and the Buenos Aires ensemble. —P.G.

**KOSTELANETZ CONDUCTS:** *Stardust* (Carmichael); *Blues in the Night* (Arlen); *St. Louis Blues* (Handy); *Manhattan Serenade* (Alter); *Sophisticated Lady* (Ellington); *Solitude* (Ellington); *Mood Indigo* (Ellington); *Stormy Weather* (Arlen); *When Day Is Done* (Katscher); played by André Kostelanetz and his Orchestra. Columbia set M-574, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ Almost everything that Kostelanetz does seems cut from the same cloth; he sticks to his last, or if you prefer his particular style. Consequently when you read "Kostelanetz Conducts" on a record face you know it's a trade mark of a particular kind of music-making designed to appeal mainly to the multitudes of listeners who simply love lushness in music. There are pieces which Kostelanetz handles in an appropriate manner—some of the sentimental ones in this album are included—but if the listener takes the trouble to acquire Ellington's own records of his pieces included here he will find a startling and radical difference in popular music-making. Those who admire Kostelanetz and continue to accept him on his own ground will find his performances here every bit as good as anything he has done to date on records, and the recording, outside of a few rattles, is good. —P.G.

### Editorial Notes

(Continued from page 30)  
precedence over newer commitments—and if artists, denied the revenue from record sales for a long time, wish to record popular fare the blame cannot be laid at the companies' doors; it is after all understandable, if not admirable, why artists wish to cater to the majority.

Although commercial values dominate the radio and record field—as, indeed, they dominate the literary field—artistic values still

exist in surprisingly large proportion. And so, if we recognize and deplore second- and third-rate artistry and music in the concert hall, the opera house, and on the air, we can, if we recognize first-rate artistry and music, turn to the phonograph. The "public passion for musical mediocrity" can be curbed by the phonograph; it has been, as a matter of fact, for a long time, and there is no reason to feel that it will not continue to be as time goes on. The discriminating listener will always sort out the wheat from the chaff, or seek guidance in reliable channels to help him do this. For the very reason that a record company is primarily a business concern, its interests are not confined to one channel; its business is to serve the whole public's interests and not to confine its work to one specific field. \* \* \*

The lateness of publication in the past two months was unavoidable. Last month, we changed printers—the better quality of the job has been noted. After this month, we expect to mail around the tenth, or when possible earlier, of the month of publication.

### A Summary

(Continued from page 41)  
mechanisms, which is fatal of course to the record being played. Most sapphire needles have much too large a point radius. If manufacturers could be induced to refrain from using pressing dies too long, two sizes should cover ninety per cent of the field for general use—.0022" and .0030". However, it is doubtful that many people could be induced to change needles even between two sizes unless they were as fussy as I am.

### From Duet to Sextet

(Continued from page 45)  
in the old days. Yet opinions have always been divided over the merits of their recording of the exquisite letter-duet in the third act, *Che soave zeffiretto* (95202 or 8043). For my part, without denying that it has certain merits, I find it disappointing. As recorded the voices are inclined to sound distant and muffled, not fresh, young and warmly expressive as they should be. Missing, I feel, are the intimacy, charm and humanity of the scene; the performance does not move me as I deem it might have in actuality. But Victor felt no qualms in asking \$5.00 for the record, though I doubt if any collector would pay more than half that for it today.

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115 Reed Ave.

Pelham 65, N. Y.

JULY, 1945

Vol. XXXI, No. 3

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